

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2010

Response Rates for Online Student Evaluations

James A. Jones (Research & Design) discusses the issue of achieving adequate student response rates with the new online evaluation system.

Online Grade Submission

Beginning with 2nd Summer Session 2010, all grades are to be submitted online to the Registrar's Office. Training is available through ITAS.

Faculty Spotlight

Carolyn Kapinus (Sociology) shares techniques she utilizes to face the challenges of teaching a large lecture class.

Teaching International Students: Equitable and Inclusive Teaching

From our *Teaching International Students* video module series, Linh Littleford (Psychological Science) suggests best practices in the inclusive classroom.

The Bookshelf

Assessment Clear and Simple: A Practical Guide for Institutions, Departments, and General Education

Services Spotlight

Teaching Awards and Grants – The 2010-11 Creative Teaching Grant Application is now available (due date is January 18, 2011).

Event Spotlight

Blackboard Day – Wednesday, November 10

Upcoming Events

Workshops, seminars, and trainings throughout the month of November

Response Rates for Online Evaluations

James A. Jones

Assistant Director - Research & Design



Over the summer, Ball State moved from a primarily paper-based evaluation system to one that is online. Many other universities have also moved in this direction as both a cost saving and green effort. Results from online evaluations have generally been found to be the same¹ as paper for mean ratings, number of positive or negative comments, and content themes when response rates are similar.

Unfortunately, response rates for online evaluations are typically much lower than those of in-class, paper administration. Overall response rates for paper-based evaluations have been reported in the literature to range from 33% to 75%, averaging 56%, while online evaluations ranged from 20% to 47%, averaging 33%².

At Ball State, our experience with response rates for paper evaluations have been considerably better, at 80%, which was identical to what a University of Michigan task force³ reported and similar to that reported by Kansas State's IDEA Center⁴. The University of Michigan task force also reported a 60% response rate for online evaluations. That is similar to what we saw at Ball State for the spring 2010 pilot of 110 courses (60.31%), but our summer pilot had lower overall response rates (1st 5 week session was 34.11%, 2nd 5 week session was 54.80%, and full summer was 57.76%).

Even if the overall response rate is 60% for this coming semester, that does not mean everyone will have half to two-thirds of their students completing evaluation forms. There will be some sections with few, perhaps no students responding, and there will be other sections that are at 100% participation. How high a response rate needs to be short of 100% is clearly debatable, and will vary by class size. For example, having 1,000 randomly selected individuals will represent a population of 10,000 well⁵, but few would likely feel confident one student would represent a class of ten even though both represent a 10% response rate. If the response rate is due to random factors, one guideline would be that a class size of 10 needs >75%, class size of 20 needs >58%, class size of 30 needs >48%, class size 50 needs > 35%,

and class size of 100 needs >21%⁶. If the underlying assumptions are not met, or more accuracy is needed, other values may be required.

For increasing response rates, there have been numerous suggestions² that generally fall under the categories of 1) increasing awareness by communications to faculty and students about the importance of the evaluations and how they are used, 2) reminder notices to students and/or instructors, 3) offering incentives for completion (e.g., bonus points or raffles), or 4) making the evaluation a requirement (e.g., consequences if evaluations are not completed). The last two categories may be controversial and difficult to implement at an individual level, but more communication can definitely be helpful. In a recent student focus group conducted at Ball State, one of the findings was that the students present were unclear how evaluations were used and who saw them. Terms, such as “promotion, tenure, and merit pay,” were not particularly informative either. After explaining more clearly that student evaluations played a role in decisions that impacted an instructor’s pay and career, the students in the group thought their fellow students would be much more inclined to complete them. The students also thought response rates would be improved if they knew their feedback would be used to improve the course, though more so if it was a mid-term and not a summative evaluation.

The online evaluations for this semester are scheduled to begin on November 29th, and will be open for students to complete at Ball State's Course Evaluations website until December 10th, the Friday before finals week begins. Your students will be receiving email reminders, but encouragement from you as their instructor to complete these evaluation forms and a brief overview of how the results are used may go a long way in helping to increase your response rates. If you have questions about the online evaluations, there is an FAQ on the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs website and additional information from ITAS. I am available to answer your questions as well at 285-1506 or via email.

¹Venette, S., Sellnow, D., and McIntyre, K. (2010). Charting new territory: assessing the online frontier of student ratings of instruction. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 35, 1, 101-115.

²Nulty, D. D. (2008). The adequacy of response rates to online and paper surveys: what can be done? *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 33, 3, 301-314.

³Online Course Evaluations (March 28, 2007). University of Michigan. Accessed at www.provost.umich.edu/reports/online_course_evaluations.pdf.

⁴Miller, M. H. (May 6, 2010). Online evaluations show same results, lower response rate. The Chronicle of Higher Education. Assessed at <http://chronicle.com/blogPost/Online-Evaluations-Show-Same/23772/>.

⁵Israel, G. D. (April, 2009). Determining sample size. University of Florida. Accessed at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pd006>.

⁶Table 3 in Nulty, D. D. (2008). The adequacy of response rates to online and paper surveys: what can be done? Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 33, 3, 310.

[Back to top](#)

Online Grade Submission

Beginning with 2nd Summer Session 2010, all grades are to be submitted online to the Registrar's Office. Ball State Information Technology provides two easy ways of accomplishing this task for our faculty.

If you keep track of student grades throughout the semester using Web Gradebook, use the Final Grades option in the Miscellaneous menu to adjust, if necessary, and submit grades.

If you use Blackboard's Grade Center to keep track of grades throughout the semester, use the BSU: Submit Grades to Registrar building block available in the Tools section of the Control Panel within your course site.

If you use neither Web Gradebook nor Blackboard to keep track of grades, then we recommend using Web Gradebook to submit them.

Additional information, how-to handouts, and tech clips can be found at Online Grade Submission and Course Evaluations.

Face-to-face training sessions are also available. Go to the Technology Training calendar or the ITAS Workshops page for schedules and registration.

If you have questions and/or concerns, please contact Yasemin Tunc at 285-5902 or Hamid Tabariasl at 285 1844.

[Back to top](#)

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Teaching in the Large Lecture Setting

Carolyn Kapinus, Associate Professor of Sociology, is one of many Ball State faculty members who teach in a large lecture setting. Her teaching load often includes either Sociology 100, ***Principles of Sociology***, with an enrollment of 200-225 freshmen or Sociology 260, ***Society and the Individual***, with an enrollment of just under 100 sophomores and juniors.



This setting brings about numerous challenges due to the number of students as well as the physical space of the traditional lecture room environment.

In a class of 100+, students can easily tune out and fade into the crowd. To off-set this challenge, Kapinus works to motivate and maintain student engagement with a variety of techniques. She makes it a point to learn as many of her students' names as possible. A seemingly monumental task, Kapinus believes that personalizing the class helps keep students focused and attentive. She also communicates with her students through email. This out-of-class contact is not only for those struggling, but she regularly sends messages to those students doing well and/or demonstrating improvement.

The physical spaces of large lecture classes are traditionally restrictive. Kapinus makes an effort to circulate as the space permits and insists the students move forward as much as possible. She has also been known to require the students change seats—those that typically sit towards the front move to the back and those from the back move to the front. This forces the students to view the class from another perspective inspiring some to make the move to the front a permanent one.

Management—whether it is the class, behavior, or paperwork—is another challenge faced by those teaching classes with large enrollments. Kapinus has techniques she employs in each of these areas. Managing the class includes incorporating a variety of experiences throughout the 50 minutes. She typically begins the class with a review of the previous meeting. She often posts a question that the students reflect on for a moment and then asks for a volunteer to

respond. Mid-way through the class period, the students engage in direct application of the day's concepts. This may be in the form of a writing exercise or discussion with a partner or small group. Kapinus admits that she is fortunate to teach in an area that can use the diversity of a large group to reinforce course content.

One way she manages behavior is by drawing the students' attention to the distraction caused by off-task talking. She also will call on someone talking to answer a question. Being caught off guard is enough for some to end the side conversations.

Kapinus has the benefit of a graduate assistant to help manage paperwork. To assist in the disseminating process, she has found that pre-counting each row helps distribute exam papers efficiently which is easier with assigned seating.

What advice does Kapinus have for those new to the large lecture format?

- Observe colleagues. There are numerous faculty members across all colleges that are very effective teachers in the large lecture context.
- Arrive to your class early to talk to your students as they enter the room. Not only does this assist with learning names, but you also get to know your students as individuals and vice versa.
- Utilize opportunities for the students to interact with their peers during class. A variety of learning experiences—large group, small group, and individual response—supports students' learning.
- Finally, focus on the positives. Showing your excitement for the material and students will help them feel motivated to participate.

If you would like additional information regarding teaching in the large lecture setting and/or are interested in observing a large lecture class, contact Kathleen Jacobi-Karna in ITAS.

[Back to top](#)

Teaching International Students: Equitable and Inclusive Teaching

Linh Littleford

Department of Psychological Science



Key Aspects of International Students' Experiences

Students' cultural backgrounds significantly affect how they view and interpret the world. Regardless of their English language proficiency, the majority of our international students have skills that made them successful in their home countries. They also possess the ability and personal fortitude necessary to leave their families, homes, and other comforts to attend educational institutions in our country. However, some of our international students' worldviews and skills that were valued and rewarded in their home countries and academic institutions may or may not be valued or adaptive in the U.S.

Depending on their countries of origin, some of our international students may need to make more cultural adjustments than others. Because of the norms in their former academic environments, some international students might enter your classes with the implicit assumptions that

- Instructors talk and students listen.
- Instructors give structured homework assignments.
- Acquiring knowledge and repeating the information learned (as in oral exams) are more valued than applying or evaluating the knowledge learned.
- Peer tutoring and copying each other's answers are forms of cooperative learning.
- Not giving appropriate citations for others' ideas, including written sources, is acceptable.

Recommended Best Practices

To ensure that your teaching is inclusive of international students, and in the process make your teaching more effective for domestic students, we recommend that you outline your goals and objectives as well as be explicit in your expectations for all course requirements.

Lectures & Oral Presentations

Specifically, when presenting materials orally, we suggest that you provide students with a list of discipline specific concepts and vocabulary and let students know what will be covered in the next class.

There are several actions you can take that will help students be more prepared to learn about unfamiliar terms or unfamiliar uses of terms.

- When you explain new concepts or assignments, it would be helpful to provide students with handouts of these concepts or to write them on a blackboard or a whiteboard.
- Pause between new thoughts to give students time to process the information.
- If you use culture-specific metaphors or slang, be sure to explain their origins and their meanings.

Reading Assignments

When assigning readings, we suggest that you give shorter assignments at first and divide larger assignments into smaller assignments. Doing so will help students not feel overwhelmed, especially when they have to use dictionaries or other aids to understand the readings.

To help students be actively engaged when reading, we suggest you provide guided questions such as

- Why is the reading relevant?
- What theoretical framework was used?
- How can you apply the theory to practice?

In addition, when possible, model how you would approach the readings by showing multiple examples of how you would identify the relevance of the readings or answer other guided questions. Finally, it would be helpful to also show students how to identify arguments, opinions, and supporting information in the readings.

Class Participation

If you require class participation, whenever possible, we suggest you

- Include topics that are personally relevant to both international and domestic students.
- Incorporate international students' strengths, experiences, and worldviews into the discussions.

- Elicit information and knowledge about other cultures.
- Encourage students to apply theories and concepts to their own experiences and in their cultural contexts.

One way to engage all students is to have them discuss, based on their experiences, whether there are similarities and differences, and why they exist, in the behaviors, thoughts, and values in the U.S. and in other countries. For example, when discussing racism in the U.S., one of our European international students shared that although he had been in the U.S. for only several months, people treated him more positively than they did his friend, a domestic student who was African American. This stimulated a discussion on White privilege in the U.S. and the forms of discrimination that occur in this and other countries.

We also recommend that you make explicit your goals and expectations regarding class participation. Specifically, outline what you value. For example, do you want students to talk more than to quietly listen? Do you want students to reach the same conclusions or to present different opinions?

Some international students dislike that American students still offer opinions even when they are not experts on a subject. These students may be reluctant to share their thoughts in class. Thus, we suggest that you clarify that having the “correct” answers is not a pre-requisite for participation and make explicit that you expect contributions from all students.

Some international students may not feel comfortable asking questions of instructors, fearing that this would convey disrespect or a challenge to the instructor’s authority, credibility, or teaching ability. So, we suggest that you explain and reassure all students that you will interpret their questions as signs of engagement rather than disrespect. Or, in class, before beginning the discussion, give students some time to write down what they would like to contribute. Finally, during the class discussion, paraphrase or summarize both domestic and international students’ comments to ensure accuracy and to encourage engagement.

Group Work

If you require group work, we recommend that you randomly assign members to groups or ensure that groups are heterogeneous. If possible, make sure that domestic students are not segregated from the international students.

Additional suggestions for instructors requiring group work include

- Explicitly discuss your rationales for giving the students group assignments.
- Convey that everyone needs to collaborate and mutually respect the different ways group members learn and contribute to the assignment.
- Provide students with suggestions to make their group more effective and collaborative.

For example, suggest that the groups

- Make certain every member has contributed.
- Seek feedback from all group members.
- Check for understanding of assignment, deadlines, and responsibilities.

Some international students have been socialized in cultures where individual failure reflects negatively on the entire group. Consequently, if someone is doing poorly, the entire group is responsible for helping him or her do well, even if it means other group members will be doing all the work for that individual. To encourage all group members to actively contribute, we suggest that you

- Begin with small assignments to allow students to develop their group-based skills.
- Include suggestions for addressing conflicts.
- Include deadlines to encourage the group to stay on task.
- Use deadlines as opportunities to provide feedback.
- Evaluate students as individuals and as a group.

We hope this information will help you be more reflective and intentional as you make your teaching inclusive of both international and domestic students. We encourage you to adapt these recommendations to meet your needs, your goals for the specific courses you teach, and the subject matter in your discipline.

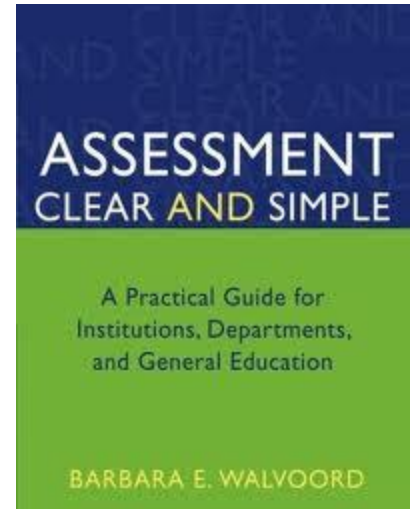
*This is from a series of video modules, **Teaching International Students**, created by ITAS. Go to our [Teaching International Students webpage](#) to view the module series.*

[**Back to top**](#)

THE BOOKSHELF

ASSESSMENT CLEAR AND SIMPLE: A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR INSTITUTIONS, DEPARTMENTS, AND GENERAL EDUCATION

Walvoord, Barbara E. ***Assessment Clear and Simple: A Practical Guide for Institutions, Departments, and General Education***. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2004.



The first edition of ***Assessment Clear and Simple*** quickly became the essential go-to guide for anyone who participates in the assessment process in higher education. With the increased pressure to perform assessment to demonstrate accountability, *Assessment Clear and Simple* is needed more than ever. This second edition of the classic resource offers a concise, step-by-step guide that helps make assessment simple, cost-efficient, and useful to an institution. It contains effective strategies for meeting the requirements of accreditation agencies, legislatures, review boards, and others, while emphasizing and showing how to move from data to actions that improve student learning. This thoroughly revised and updated edition includes many new or expanded features, including:

- Illustrative examples drawn from the author's experience consulting with more than 350 institutions.
- A basic, no-frills assessment plan for departments and for general education.
- Tips on how to integrate portfolios and e-portfolios into the assessment process.
- Suggestions for using rubrics and alternatives to rubrics, including doing assessment for multidisciplinary work.
- Clear instructions on how to construct a coherent institution-wide assessment system and explain it to accreditors.
- Ideas for assigning responsibility for general education assessment.
- Strategies for gathering information about departmental assessment while keeping the departmental workload manageable.
- Information on how to manage assessment in times of budgetary cutbacks.

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[Back to top](#)

SERVICES SPOTLIGHT

TEACHING AWARDS AND GRANTS

Innovation in Teaching, Assessment, and Scholarship (ITAS) sponsors and/or administratively supports the following programs that recognize and promote excellence in teaching at Ball State University:

Excellence in Teaching Award

The Excellence in Teaching Award recognizes faculty dedication and talent in the classroom. ITAS coordinates the selection process of this annual award. For more information and a list of recent winners, see the Excellence in Teaching Award page.

Creative Teaching Grants

ITAS provides administrative support for the Creative Teaching Grants, a program that promotes instructional creativity and experimentation. The University Creative Teaching Committee administers the award and chooses awardees. Full-time faculty interested in applying should ask for an application manual from ITAS (TC 402) or print out the version available below.

The 2010-2011 Creative Teaching Grant Application is now available. Please note that the application cover sheets (the last two pages of the manual) can be filled out and printed, or the document may be printed and filled out with a typewriter.

[Back to top](#)

EVENT SPOTLIGHT

BLACKBOARD DAY

Wednesday, November 20, 2010

10:00-11:30 am

TC 411

Blackboard company representatives will be on campus for a presentation and faculty forum. This is a great opportunity for us to learn about new initiatives and directions at the company as well as voice our questions and concerns.

In attendance from Blackboard:

Deanna Nelson, Vice President, North American Higher Ed, East

Brad Koch, Director, Product Management

Donna Jones, Senior Solutions Engineer

Cathy Fowler, Account Executive

Registration is not required.

[Back to top](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS - November 2010

Monday, October 1

Developing Online Courses: Content Delivery & Instruction, Part 2

3:00-5:00pm

TC405

Tuesday, November 2

Developing Online Courses: Content Delivery & Instruction, Part 2
(repeat of Monday session)

3:00-5:00pm

TC405

Wednesday, November 3

Online Grade Submission

2:00-3:00pm

TC405

Introduction to Endnote

3:00-4:30pm

TC411

Blackboard: Q&A

4:00-5:00pm

TC405

Thursday, November 4

Moving inQsit Data in SPSS

2:00-3:30pm

TC411

Monday, November 8

Developing Online Courses: Building a Community of Learners

3:00-5:00pm

TC405

Tuesday, November 9

Clicker Workshop – Question Writing for Student Response Systems

11:00am-12:00pm TC412

Introduction to Endnote

11:00am-12:30pm TC411

Developing Online Courses: Building a Community of Learners
(repeat of Monday session)

3:00-5:00pm

TC405

Wednesday, November 10

Blackboard: Q&A

4:00-5:00pm

TC405

Thursday, November 11

Visualizing Results with Tables in Microsoft Word

2:00-3:30pm

TC411

Friday, November 12

Blackboard: Grade Center

11:00am-12:30pm TC411

Monday, November 15

Developing Online Courses: Assessing Student Performance

3:00-5:00pm

TC405

Tuesday, November 16Developing Online Courses: Assessing Student Performance
(repeat of Monday session)

3:00-5:00pm

TC405

Wednesday, November 17

Blackboard: Designing and Effective Course Site

3:00-4:00pm

TC411

Blackboard: Q&A

4:00-5:00pm

TC405

Thursday, November 18

Video Conference Overview for Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

3:00-4:00pm

BC200

Friday, November 19

Video Conference Overview for Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

10:00-11:00am

BC200

Wednesday, November 24

Blackboard: Q&A

4:00-5:00pm

TC405

Monday, November 29

inQsit – Creating Online Tests

3:00-4:30pm

TC411

[Back to top](#)

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